3. Need for the adoption of a more equitable policy in the administration of State Finances.

Mr. M. K. Madhavan Pillai (Member, Karunagapalli taluk) first thanked the Government for having appointed a Special Officer to conduct an Industrial Survey of the State.

Proceeding to his subject, he said that the present expenditure of the Government was greater than their income, that that was against the first principle of political economy and that there was no possibility of the revenue increasing hereafter, while the growing demand for additional roads, better facilities for irrigation and the need for additional schools required throughout the State would surely entail still greater expenditure on the Government. To increase the revenue, there were but two methods, namely, to impose new taxes and to invest sufficient capital and find out new sources of income. For obvious reasons, both the methods could not be adopted now. The only possible solution of the question was by reducing the expenditure whenever possible. The Member then dealt with the following departments.

Public Works Department.—The Member said that the department was overstaffed, that the increase in the staff had not proportionately brought any additional advantage to the Government and that there was considerable scope for reducing the expenditure. Since the year 1072 M. E., the staff of the department had grown by about one-half and their pay also had been considerably increased, but there was no corresponding increase in the length of roads and canals. The Kodayar Project Division could be abolished, since the Kodayar Works were finished. The offices of the Deputy Chief Engineer, two or three Executive Engineers, two or three Assistant Engineers and a number of Overseers could also be done away with.

Next, the Member contended that the amount sanctioned for each work was not being properly spent. The contractors engaged sub-contractors who in turn engaged other contractors under them. A margin of profit surely went to all the contractors and sub-contractors, with the result that the amount actually spent on any work was but a fraction of the sanctioned grant. That was due to the fact that the estimates for such works were not being carefully scrutinised and checked in the Huzur Office by an officer possessing the requisite technical knowledge. The appointment of such an officer, who should not aspire to get any promotion in the department, had been urged upon the attention of the Government by the Member from the ninth session of the Assembly but to no effect. He, therefore, prayed that such an officer be appointed in the Secretariat without delay.

He then pointed out that the money sanctioned for the maintenance of village roads was a mere waste and that the amount allowed for the maintenance and repairs of public buildings was also excessive. He also prayed that the P. W. D. contracts might be given as far as possible to natives of the State. More roads should be opened for the welfare of the people.

Police Department.—The Member said that the abolition of Circle Inspectors in the Padmanabhapuram and Trivandrum Divisions was a desirable measure of reform, but he did not see the necessity for retaining one Circle Inspector for the Trivandrum Division alone. He suggested that that place also might be abolished and that one District Superintendent, or, at the most, two Assistant Superintendents should suffice for both the Divisions together. With the savings resulting from the abolition of Circle Inspectors, the pay of the hard-worked constables should be increased.

Sanitary Department.—Out of the total expenditure of Rs. 71,450 on the department, more than Rs. 55,000 went for the pay of the staff. The benefit to the people was not proportionate to the amount spent on the department. The Head of the Department did not tour sufficiently in the interior parts of the country. The Member, therefore, prayed that the officer might be provided with a suitable place elsewhere and that the Sanitary Department be amalgamated with the Medical Department.

Forest Department.—The expenditure in the Forest Department also was very high, when compared to the revenue derived from it. The apparent increase in revenue was no matter for gratification. The revenue under 'minor forest produce' was not being sufficiently developed. The apparent increase in

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revenue was due mainly to the reckless denudation of the forests. Though the area of the forests was considerable, being over 2,100 square miles, the revenue was not adequate, being a little over 13 lakhs of rupees per year. The proportion between the area of the forests and the annual revenue was comparatively much better in the sister States of Mysore and Cochin. When compared with Travancore, the proportion of expenditure to revenue was more favourable in Mysore, Baroda and Cochin. The net revenue from "Forests" in 1068 and in 1091 was almost equal. That would show that there was no material increase under net revenue. The forest officers of the present day did not sufficiently tour about in the interior forests and did not devise measures for the development of the economic resources of the forests. Sufficient attention was not being paid to the scientific working and management of the forests, preparation of working plans, etc. The Divisional Forest Officers should be asked to submit quarterly reports showing the places inspected by them, the timber or other forest produce found there, their uses, the probable revenue derivable therefrom, their cost of transport, etc. The department should be entrusted to an officer specially qualified in Forest Economics. Promotions in the higher ranks should not go by seniority alone but by competency in developing the forest resources. More money should be spent for opening up the forests. The Member also prayed that export duty on timber might be revived. There should be a rule that the men selected and sent out for special training in the Forest Department, or for that matter in any other department, should be natives of the country.

Dewan.—There is a distinct provision to this effect in the rules for the grant of foreign scholarships.

The Member then made the following suggestions :—

(1) Swampy areas fit for cultivation within settled reserves, such as the Kodumon Reserve, should be disafforested and registered in the names of private individuals.

(2) The pay of the Heads of Departments should not exceed that of a High Court Judge.

(3) The Government should not encourage the registry of lands in the State in the names of wealthy outsiders for speculative purposes. The high rates of *tharavila* precluded the people of the State from getting lands registered in their names.

(4) The Government should show to the ryots, by demonstration and experiment, that *punja* and *cherikal* lands could be cultivated annually, instead of at intervals of 5 to 12 years.

(5) The revenue of the State should be equitably distributed for the benefit of all taluks. Special allotments should be provided for affording irrigation facilities and for encouraging special industries.

(6) The Government had set apart about 8 lakhs of rupees for a Sinking Fund. That sum should be invested in the Co-operative Societies which were sadly in need of funds.

(7) Taxation should not be confined to land-holders alone, but other people, such as Vakils and merchants, should be required to contribute a share.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

II. MAIN HEADS OF REVENUE.

(1) Land Revenue.

4. Need for the modification of the Rules regarding the leasing of trees planted on *poramboke* lands by private individuals and the registry of *poramboke* lands not required for public purposes.

Mr. K. M. Sivathanu Pillai (Member, Tovala taluk) said that the subject was brought up at the 3rd, 5th, 6th and 12th sessions of the Assembly. He stated

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